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FOREIGN LANGUAGE ARTICULATION--KINDERGARTEN THROUGH COLLEGE.

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THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A WELL-ARTICULATED LANGUAGE PROGRAM IS DEPENDENT UPON DEALING WITH SUCH PROBLEMS AS ESTABLISHING AND FINANCING FLES PROGRAMS, COURSE OBJECTIVES, METHODOLOGY, TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS, AND STUDENT PLACEMENT. AT THE SAME TIME, CONSIDERATION MUST BE GIVEN TO THE OPINIONS OF TEACHER TRAINING INSTITUTES, THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, AND OTHER AGENCIES CONCERNED WITH PROGRESS IN THE LANGUAGE FIELD. (SS)

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Perhaps one way of appreciating the formidable problem of articulation in foreign language instruction is to review briefly the many--and sometimes abrupt--changes that have occurred within the last decade. About ten years ago, some of us followed what I think can be called a traditional approach to foreign language instruction. In some cases this approach was replaced by the audio-lingual approach, which in turn was replaced by the audio-lingual-visual approach, which is now being challenged by the eclectic, the humanistic, the multi-sensory and the conceptual approaches.

Instructional materials have also been through the crucible of change. Some of us leaped from the bare book to the "integrated package" which gradually filled our rooms with records, tapes, picture books, flashcards, magnetic boards, wall charts, filmstrips, films, ready-made and home-made realia and all the necessary electro-mechanical equipment to bring some of these components to life. On the horizon, and not too dimly, stand the prospects of programed individual learning materials and the suggestion of study carrels and computer directed instruction.

Still another change occurred--in our students. Not in their nature, but in their number. There are more of them, principally at the beginning levels and in uneven distribution among the traditionally taught modern foreign languages.

These three changes in instructional approach, instructional materials, and student enrollment and distribution occurred in many parts of the state and the nation; unfortunately, they occurred at different times, at different speeds, and with different emphases. The character of these and similar changes seems to be the crux of the articulation problem.

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So much for recent history. What of articulation today? Effective articulation, both horizonal and vertical, leads to an integrated program in which specific and specified skills and appreciations that are learned at one level are strengthened and further developed at the next level. Any one element that impedes or prevents

such a continuum of learning creates a problem of articulation. Articulation thus viewed is both complex and comprehnsive. It is true of articulation between levels, the elementary school, the junior high school and the senior high school, and it is equally true of the colleges and universities which receive students from the lower schools. The difficulties stem from a lack of clear communication among the various levels. In some districts teachers do not meet to discuss questions which affect all students of the district. In many cases they hear of each other only through the stories which students carry between schools.

Another difficulty is that courses of study are chosen separately for each level, and there is no teaching staff agreement on overall aims and goals for the entire program. Frequently, this results in a movement of students from a level of instruction given audio-lingually to the next level which is translation-grammar oriented. Some teachers refuse to accept what the student has learned in the feeder school and start him all over again from the beginning. Such practices result in disappointment and dissatisfaction.

More specific articulation problems usually found in a grade 6 to 12 foreign language sequence include:

1. Establishing a FLES program
   a. How many languages?
   b. Which languages?
   c. For which students?
   d. Or are the answers to these questions predetermined by the F.L. program offered at the receiving school?

2. Inadequate funding of FLES programs
   a. Can school districts expect financial relief and support in order to maintain more than a token FLES program, if local funding is not sufficient?

3. Goals and objectives of the total F.L. program
   a. Are they really measurable and measured in terms of student performance?
   b. Is language a social institution? If so, should this fact be emphasized over the view of language as an inventory of lexicon and structures?

4. Instructional approach and methodology
   a. Is there apparent or real difficulty in articulation between those teachers who put primary emphases on the reading and writing skills and those who stress the oral skills?

5. Teacher qualifications and credentialing
   a. Can we assume that a teacher who meets our present qualifications and credentialing requirements can teach all levels of foreign language instruction or must he be assigned to the beginning levels?

6. Teacher assignment
   a. Who teaches what? Does assigning the same teachers to the same levels of instruction for several years promote vertical articulation?

7. Scheduling
   a. Is it flexible enough to allow for transitional or maintenance courses for those high school students who now receive no F.L. training between their junior year in high school and their freshman year in college?

8. Student placement - How is it to be done?
   a. By fixed formula for all incoming freshmen?
   b. By teacher recommendation?
   c. By subjective test of less than four language skills?
   d. By standardized, objective four-skill test, plus cultural understanding?

This list is not complete, for there is much that can be accommodated under the umbrella of articulation.

Still another consideration, aside from curricular matters, is the series of agencies that bear, to a lesser or greater degree, upon articulation. The range extends from the classroom teacher to the Foreign Language Department Chairman, the counselor, the school principal, the district office, the county office, the teacher-training institutions, the State Legislature, and the State Department of Education. That these various agencies may see foreign language articulation problems and their solutions from different points of view is understandable. That these agencies have as their ultimate and common concern the assurance that the student who embarks on a study of foreign languages will be able to pursue and complete it without hiatus, unnecessary setbacks, or regression is also equally clear. It is the purpose of this meeting to explore the various solutions and to make significant inroads into the complex problem of integrated, sequential foreign language learning. We are here to find practical solutions to concrete problems. It is our hope that this meeting may serve as a basis for further discussion and as a guideline for continued renewal of foreign language learning.

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